

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Postsecondary Education
Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education
Washington, DC 20006-8544



Fiscal Year 2009

Application Package for Grants Under the
United States-Russia Program: Improving Research and Educational
Activities in Higher Education

(CFDA NUMBER: 84.116S)

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents.....	2
Dear Applicant Letter	3
Program Description	6
Background to the program	6
Examples of collaborative study programs	7
Eligibility Requirements.....	9
Financial Considerations.....	10
Fees	11
Stipends.....	11
Faculty/staff/student mobility stipends.....	12
Language stipends.....	12
Annual Project Directors' Meetings	13
Annual and Final Performance Reports.....	14
Memorandum of Understanding.....	14
Competition Guidelines	15
Goals and Subject Areas for FY2009.....	15
Application Process	17
Program Narrative	20
Evaluation Criteria.....	22
Submission of Applications	30
Contact Information.....	31

Dear Applicant Letter

Dear Applicant:

Thank you for your interest in applying for a grant under the United States-Russia Program, 'Improving Research and Educational Activities in Higher Education' (U.S.-Russia Program or the Program). This is a grant competition administered jointly by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) of the U.S. Department of Education (the Department) and the Russian Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation (the Russian Ministry).

The emphasis in this program is on the development of partnerships between Russian and American universities that promote educational and academic exchanges of students and faculty between the two countries, contributing to the advancement of education and science in both countries. The aim is to support innovative projects that will improve education activities in higher education in the two nations.

It is expected that these programs, through promoting the study of and communication in foreign languages, will also increase awareness and understanding of the two cultures and strengthen the professional and scholarly ties between the two countries. This objective must remain central to grant proposals, since the ultimate intent of the Program is to assist with the strengthening of ties between the United States and Russia.

This program is based on objectives outlined in the 2006 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the United States Department of Education and the Russian Ministry of Education and Science. The MOU laid out a plan focused on expanding cooperation and developing partnerships among various types of educational institutions in the United States and Russia that reflect the best practices of the education systems of both countries.

This letter highlights a few items in this application package important for applicants in the United States. You should review the entire package carefully before preparing and submitting your application.

An institution of higher education (IHE) from the United States interested in applying for grants under this U.S.-Russia Program should contact an IHE in the Russian Federation with who they would like to form an educational consortium for potential collaboration. The lead U.S. institution in the consortium should submit the proposal to FIPSE based on the guidelines given in this application document.

An applicant must select one academic discipline as the subject area for the grant application in this U.S.-Russia competition. For FY 2009, the Department and the Russian Ministry have jointly decided to make three awards as follows.

Grant A – In Environmental Science

Grant B – In Biotechnology

Grant C – In any other subject area, other than Environment
Science or Biotechnology

Under this collaboration, the lead Russian institution should submit the same proposal to the Russian Ministry of Education and Science based on the application requirements of the Russian Ministry. The Russian partner should contact the Russian Ministry for application requirements and submission guidelines at the contact information given below.

Mr. Alexei V. Talonov
Deputy Director, Division of International Education and Cooperation
Federal Agency on Education
Moscow, Lyusinovskaia 51
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U.S. applicants must submit applications to FIPSE by July 7, 2009

Though FIPSE and the Russian Ministry are issuing similar application materials and program guidelines to the institutions in their respective countries, some important differences exist to reflect country-specific needs. U.S. applicants should use the application materials and program guidelines issued by the U.S. Department of Education when completing the application packet.

In order to facilitate a comparable evaluation of the applications by officials from both countries, it is important that the proposal is developed jointly by

the U.S. and Russian partners in the consortium so formed. All partners from both countries must agree on the objectives and content of the application.

All applications for FY 2009 grants under the U.S.-Russia Program should only be submitted electronically using e-Grants website accessible at:

<http://www.grants.gov>

A thorough discussion is included in this application package. *You are urged to acquaint yourself with the requirements this system early.*

U.S. applicants must submit applications to the U.S. Department of Education by July 7, 2009.

We suggest that you submit your application several days before the deadline date.

Applications submitted late will not be accepted.

You are reminded that the grant notice published in the *Federal Register* is the official document, and that you should not rely upon any information that is inconsistent with the guidance contained within the official document.

Sincerely,

Ralph Hines

Acting Director, FIPSE

Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

U.S. Department of Education

1900 K St, NW, Washington, DC 20006

United States-Russia Program: Improving Research and Educational Activities in Higher Education

Program Description

Background to the program

On May 31, 2006, the U.S. Secretary of Education and the Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation signed an historic agreement aimed at promoting understanding between the peoples of the Russian Federation (RF) and the United States (U.S.) and to strengthen the role of universities in building an innovative society.

The focus of this Program, 'Improving Research and Educational Activities in Higher Education,' (U.S.-Russia Program or the Program) is the support of innovative projects that will improve education activities in higher education in the two nations. The emphasis is on the development of partnerships between Russian and American universities that promote educational and academic exchanges of students and teaching faculty between the two countries, contributing to the advancement of education and science in both.

The growing pace of globalization in virtually all aspects of human life demands that our postsecondary institutions rethink how best to prepare students for a lifetime of work that will, in all likelihood, be in the global context. To support this goal, since 2007 the Russian Ministry of Education and Science (the Ministry) and Department of Education's Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) have provided grants for collaborative projects that can contribute to educational innovation and to the acquisition of knowledge – both cultural and vocational – required to meet the challenges of the global knowledge-based economy.

FIPSE's participation in this program is governed by Section 744 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (HEA), 20 U.S.C. §1138c, which authorizes funding for projects to support "international cooperation and student exchange among postsecondary educational institutions" and section 744(c)(3) and (4) of the HEA, 20 U.S.C. §1138c(c)(3) and (4) which authorizes the "evaluation and dissemination of model programs."

The U.S.-Russia Program provides financial support to bilateral projects involving Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) or educational organizations active in the field of higher education and/or vocational training with the aim of enhancing collaboration between the Russian Federation and the United States. The Department invites applications from institutions in the U.S. for projects aimed at the exchange of experiences and innovative practices between institutions in the two countries intended at improving the quality of higher education in both countries through the development of joint courses, educational materials, and other types of educational and methodological activities. It is expected that such collaborative projects would also advance the study and teaching of English and Russian languages while contributing to a better understanding of the cultural milieus of the United States and Russia.

Relationships built during exchange programs are likely to be maintained as students move into their careers, thus increasing opportunities for future international collaboration that are an asset to the governments, private companies, and NGOs in the both countries. It is expected that sufficient funds will be set aside to enable student, faculty and staff exchanges that result in significant improvement in languages and our knowledge about each other's cultures. Such exchanges for teaching, research assignments, or working in bilateral groups must be done within the consortium and be directly related to the project's collaborative studies focus.

All applicants should demonstrate the capacity for institutionalization and sustainability, which will encourage long-term research and educational collaboration.

Examples of collaborative study programs

Applicants to the U.S.-Russia Program may consider how a collaborative U.S.-Russian consortium might:

1. Support U.S. students who have attained high levels of Russian language ability, and Russian students who have attained high levels of English language ability, (perhaps through previous participation in foreign language study abroad programs), who want to work in a scientific research group or on a project-based scientific internship abroad.
 - Rationale: The U.S. and Russia have many issues of common interest in many disciplines, but each may provide unique

opportunities and settings in which students can advance and apply their knowledge and skills.

- Outcome: Students, particularly in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) areas who might otherwise not attempt to gain a high level proficiency in a foreign language would have an incentive to do so through participation in this program.
2. Support projects that would encourage the joint development of textbooks and IT-based educational materials for undergraduate level students.
 - Rationale: The U.S. and Russia have a common need to advance teaching and learning using the new distance learning technologies. This could entail joint development of multimedia courses, digital simulations, electronic laboratory simulations, web-based instructional resources, and electronic assessments.
 - Outcome: Online resources and instructional materials are made accessible to students in both countries. Bilingual scientific resources will be of use to both students and practitioners.
 3. Support projects that allow U.S. and Russian faculty to learn about each other's educational systems, including teaching methods, student learning assessment, accreditation, administration, and fiscal management. Included in fiscal management could be such topics as how to obtain support for large-scale or shared science instruments or facilities, how to translate basic research findings into commercial product development, and how to benefit from patent and copyright laws.
 - Rationale: The Russian system of higher education, which is centralized and largely dependent on the government for national curriculum and program guidelines and funding, is quite different from the American system in which each university functions as an independent and autonomous body. In the Russian system the government regulates institutional quality whereas in the U.S. the government works with independent bodies that guarantee minimum quality standards through institutional accreditation. These administrative and structural differences can impede cooperation and collaboration among U.S. and Russian researchers and educators.
 - Outcome: Develop new models of research or instructional collaboration that facilitates, for example, joint U.S.-Russian

degree programs, long-term research partnerships, and improved compliance with patent and copyright laws.

Eligibility Requirements

The U.S.-Russia Program is open to all disciplinary and professional fields and, vocational programs, as well as cross-disciplinary studies, involving undergraduate and graduate students, and faculty and staff from Russian and U.S. institutions of higher education and vocational and training institutions. This program does not support doctoral candidates.

This application package is for institutions in the U.S. to submit proposals for projects to support the objectives of the U.S.-Russia program.

The following definitions apply to the U.S.-Russia Program:

Institution of Higher Education (IHE) means any recognized establishment, which, according to the applicable laws or practices of each country, offers qualifications or diplomas at the higher or postsecondary education level, whatever such establishment may be called.

Vocational education and training institution means any type of public, semi-public or private body, which provides occupational or work-related knowledge and skills, including programs that are competency based and directed at current and/or future jobs, duties, and tasks within an occupational or industrial setting.

Student means any person enrolled full-time in courses or programs leading to a degree completion that is run by an IHE or a vocational education and training institution.

The Program will not fund basic research for its own sake, but it will fund student, faculty or staff participation in such research that has the collateral benefit of advancing education and international collaboration in ways that directly meet the stated goals of the Program. Applications may be based on the results of existing educational and research partnerships of IHEs in the U.S. and Russia, or based on new relationships between Russian and American partners.

All applicants (consortia) must have a non-profit lead institution in the United States, who would be the 'project lead'. The U.S. project lead would be responsible for submitting the grant application to the U.S. Department of Education, for coordinating the project, and for grant management and fiscal control. A consortium must have a minimum of one U.S. institution and one Russian institution as partners, but the Department encourages U.S. institutions to include additional partners from non-research institutions such as community colleges that have expertise in the content area or innovative pedagogy.

The consortium, possibly with some previous experience in U.S.-Russia partnerships, may include other organizations including industry and business groups, non-governmental organizations, publishers, government departments, chambers of commerce, and research institutes. Inclusion of such organizations in the consortium may help give your project the national and international visibility necessary for it to succeed beyond the funding period. These partners may offer internships or may offer professional advice and expertise as part of this grant program.

Consortia should operate on the principle of parity and partnership. We recommend that you have the same number of Russian and American institutions and organizations in your consortium and that you exchange the same number of faculty and students. This, however, is not an eligibility requirement.

We do not encourage consortia with more than four (4) partners in total.

Financial Considerations

The Department has proposed a budget of \$400K to fund three (3) projects in FY 2009. Each project will be funded for a 36-month or three-year period. The total budget for this program for the three-year period is \$1.2M. The estimated range of awards for the first budget year is \$100 to \$150K for each of the three grants. The U.S. institutions will receive funding from the Department. The Russian institutions in the consortia will receive funding from the Russian Ministry. The budget for the Russian Federation is a comparable but separate amount in rubles and would also fund the Russian partners for up to three projects.

Funds provided to the U.S. institutions by the U.S. Department of Education under this grant can only be used for students and staff of the U.S. institutions. Eligible U.S. students must be U.S. citizens or resident aliens. The use of these funds for Russian students and staff is not permitted since the Russian partner institutions in the consortium will receive an equivalent funding from the Russian Ministry of Education and Science.

Use of grant funds to pay for college tuition or any form of financial aid to students or anyone else is prohibited, with the exception of payments for language lessons.

This Program does not require cost sharing or matching. However it is important for the applicant to explain how a part of or the entire project will be sustained beyond the funding period. U.S. applicants may describe in the budget narrative any voluntary contributions that the institutions decide to make. Note that voluntary institutional contributions, which are not required, but pledged in the proposal, must be made over the project duration and appropriately documented.

The Department will provide funding to successful U.S. applicants in this competition via the lead institutions, who will serve as the grantee and fiscal agent. Russian applicants must check their own requirements for the program.

Fees

Students are expected to spend some time in the Russian Federation. Students studying abroad will pay the usual tuition and fees at their home institution and should incur no additional financial obligations to the host institution(s). This includes fees for tuition, registration, examinations, and the use of library and laboratory facilities.

The issue of tuition and fees must be carefully negotiated before the proposal is submitted, and the application for support must describe the agreed arrangements.

Stipends

Stipends are divided into two categories:

- Faculty/staff/student mobility stipends, and
- Language stipends.

Faculty/staff/student mobility stipends

For undergraduate or graduate level students, mobility stipends are intended to offset additional costs incurred by traveling abroad in addition to the costs of remaining at the home (sponsoring) institution. Legitimate costs include travel and room and board expenses. Student stipends must not be used for tuition or fees.

The amount of money allocated to faculty, staff, or students for research or study abroad should reflect actual costs incurred. Please note that mobility money is intended for foreign research and study only. This means that stipends may not be used for faculty and/or students to move to other institutions within the U.S. Mobility requests should be accompanied by clear descriptions of the purpose of mobility and planned educational pursuits.

Faculty and staff travel stipends should be estimated at \$1,000 per week plus a fixed amount of \$2,000 for travel per person in relation to scholarly work and teaching at a partner Russian institution with a minimum of one week and a maximum of one academic term or a compressed (summer) schedule.

Student travel stipends should be estimated at \$600 per week plus a fixed amount of \$2,000 for travel per person in relation to study at a partner Russian institution with a minimum of one academic term or a compressed (summer) schedule.

Language stipends

A key objective of this program is to encourage and enable faculty, staff, and students to develop ideas and practices that support a U.S.-Russian perspective within an academic, cultural, and linguistic milieu. Although the U.S.-Russia program has language instruction as a key component in each funded project, we do not fund projects that focus exclusively on language training and study.

Grants funds may include language stipends that are intended to help U.S. faculty, staff, and students to improve their proficiency in Russian language for purposes of completing research activities and/or study in Russia. Thus, courses taken for training in Russian language may only be to improve language skills to enable faculty or students to participate in the academic component of the project, but not for basic language skills.

It is important to define carefully in the project narrative the resources that the applicant institution has allocated for teaching and learning Russian. It is also important to describe carefully language instruction to be taken by students and faculty with different proficiency levels. Please note that applications proposing programs of study with weak provision for language and cultural preparation will be considered less competitive. Language proficiency and cultural study prior to and during the study abroad period is key to a student's integration in the academic and training culture of the host institution and country. The proposal must include specific provisions for language study as part of the study abroad.

Language stipends may be budgeted for each year of the grant period. We do not recommend the total amount of federal funds used for language training to exceed 15% of the project budget.

If the lead U.S. institutions need assistance with language preparation, they should contact the FIPSE coordinator for this program.

[Annual Project Directors' Meetings](#)

An important part of the U.S.-Russia Program is the annual meetings. All project leads and key project personnel are expected to attend the annual meetings. This participation is essential because it provides an important opportunity for the consortia members to share their individual experiences of the challenges in running a project of this nature, as well as its successes. It is also intended as a forum for the Russian Ministry and U.S. Department of Education officials to discuss program coordination between the two nations. It is expected that the independent project evaluator appointed by the lead U.S. institution would attend the first annual meeting.

The annual meetings will be held alternatively in Russia and in the United States. Applicants should allocate sufficient funds for travel to these annual meetings.

The 2009 Annual meeting is scheduled to be held in xxxxx

Annual and Final Performance Reports

The two agencies – Russian Ministry and the Department – will monitor carefully the progress of projects towards their goals through regular communication with the respective lead institutions. As part of this monitoring process, the project leads are required to submit annual reports to their respective agency. Annual performance reports must provide a status report on project goals, completed activities, expenditures, evaluation report (from the external evaluator), and a plan for upcoming activities. The Russian Ministry and FIPSE reserve the right to increase or decrease funding, or to terminate a project based on annual performance reviews.

Both agencies also require a final performance report at the completion of the project. The Department has a website for providing current project information (such as project team, project descriptions, etc), and for submitting annual performance reports and final performance report. This website is also used for the Project Directors to submit requests for administrative changes.

Guidance for managing the project and instructions for submitting performance reports are provided to the Project Directors at the first annual meeting. The U.S. Project Directors will be notified when annual reports are due; these are typically due during early June and mid-July. FIPSE's final reports are due within 90 days after the grant ends.

Memorandum of Understanding

Proposals in this program will be implemented only with signed agreements or memoranda of understanding (MOU) that demonstrate the commitment of the partner institutions. The most competitive proposals submit signed agreements as part of their application package. Memoranda may be signed in the first few months of the first year of the project. The Department reserves the right to terminate any project that has not provided signed agreements, and no student may commence study abroad until all partners sign the MOU.

A MOU may include many items to be determined by the consortium partners. However, an MOU must include agreements on the recognition of credits and on tuition and fees. It must include references to the certificates that will be awarded. The agreement may also cover student services, housing assistance, cultural preparation, and special fees such as health insurance.

Competition Guidelines

Goals and Subject Areas for FY2009

The U.S.-Russia Program is an educational cooperation between IHEs (Institutions of Higher Education) in the Russian Federation and the IHEs in the United States of America. The objective is to use the educational study content as a vehicle for learning of languages and cultures, sharing knowledge, and forming long-term relations between the two countries. In the context of the modern international society and a global economy, an understanding of the cultural context plays a vital role in education and training. Knowledge of a country's language opens the doors to its culture.

It is therefore vital that a project funded under this program must accomplish all of the following five goals. In the area of study chosen by the applicants, the consortium must:

- a. Establish a student and staff exchange (mobility) program among all partners of the consortium.
- b. Demonstrate language acquisition and/or improvement during the grant period among all exchange students from both countries.
- c. Demonstrate an enhanced understanding of the cultural milieus of the partner country among all participating in the exchange program.
- d. Demonstrate sharing of innovative or best practices in education and curricula with institutions in the partner country.
- e. Establish or enhance a long-term educational partnership between the IHEs from the two countries.

Applicants must select one academic discipline as the subject area for their grant proposal in this U.S.-Russia competition. For the year 2009, the Department and the Russian Ministry have jointly decided to make three awards, as follows.

Grant A - Environmental Science Studies

Grant B - Biotechnology Studies

Grant C - Any other discipline, other than Environmental Science and Biotechnology

We define the three areas of study as follows. However, we interpret these definitions in a broad, generic way, and not limiting these to the examples in the definitions given below.

1. Environmental Science is the inter-disciplinary application of scientific principles to restore, protect, and sustain the quality of the natural environment (ecosystems), to provide safe and healthy water, air, and land for human habitation, agriculture, and for other plant and animal life. Environmental science encompasses issues such as climate change, conservation, biodiversity, water quality, groundwater contamination, soil contamination, and use of natural resources, waste management, sustainable development, disaster reduction, air pollution, and noise pollution. Environmental issues are entwined with human activities, study of economics, law and social sciences, and these are often applied in conjunction with environmental science.
2. Biotechnology is the application of disciplines like genetics, molecular biology, biochemistry, embryology and cell biology, to the management of (parts of) microorganisms, or of cells and tissues of higher organisms, to make or modify food and other products, or to develop processes for use in healthcare and medicine. It includes terms like bioengineering, biomedical engineering, patho-biotechnology, and the like. Biotechnology is linked to disciplines like chemical engineering, information technology, and biorobotics.
3. Any other discipline: The applicants for this grant may select an area of study of their choice and expertise, other than Environmental Science and Biotechnology defined above. This includes arts, architecture-urban planning, humanities, social sciences, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering or Maths), legal and management studies, tourism-hotel management, or any other.

In each of the three funded projects, while working in the study area of their choice, the applicants *must accomplish* all of the five goals, (a) to (e) stated above.

Collaboration between U.S. and Russian institutions in each of the three projects should be aimed at developing joint courses, educational materials or methodologies. It is expected that these programs, through promoting foreign languages, will also increase awareness and understanding of the two cultures and strengthen the cultural ties between the two countries. This objective must remain central to all three grants listed above. Such a goal can only be met through academic exchange of students and staff. While it may not be possible to arrange for student travel in the first year of the grant period, it is expected that such exchange will be an integral part of the program during the second and third year of the grant.

Application Process

Below is the application process for U.S. applicants.

1. The Consortium

- a. The competition is open to all institutions of higher education (IHEs) in the Russian Federation and to all IHEs in the U.S.
- b. An institution in the U.S. interested in submitting an application should contact an IHE in the Russian Federation with the aim of developing a bi-lateral educational program.
- c. When the Russian IHE agrees to be the lead institution from the Russian Federation, the two lead institutions should enter into written agreements to form a consortium.
- d. The two lead IHEs may then invite other IHEs in the Russian Federation and in the U.S. to participate in this project as partners in their consortium. We do not recommend a single consortium to have more than four institutional partners in total including the two lead IHEs.
- e. All IHEs in both countries will have to provide letters from the institution's head (or authorized signatory) in support of the grant application and the formation of the consortium with the IHEs in both countries. These letters should be included with the application.

2. Development of a joint proposal

- a. The consortium should select one of the three grants that they wish to apply for:
 - A – Environmental Science
 - B – Biotechnology

C – Any other subject area, other than A or B

- b. All partners of the consortium should jointly develop a proposal to address the program's five goals described above.

3. Submit the proposal

- a. The Lead U.S. institution should submit this joint proposal to FIPSE using the instructions given in this document and in the notice in the Federal Register.
- b. The Lead Russian institution would submit the same proposal, with the same objectives and activities, to the Russian Ministry of Education and Science using the guidelines and the application requirements provided by the Russian Ministry.
- c. **Applications from the U.S. consortia leads must be submitted to FIPSE by June 29, 2009.**

4. Review and selection of applications

The selection of successful applications will be a competitive process based on external peer review, as well as negotiations between the U.S. and Russian government officials. All eligible applications will be reviewed as described below.

- a. FIPSE will conduct a peer review of all eligible applications received by the due date. Three independent reviewers review each application. These are the applications sent to FIPSE by the U.S. team lead in the consortium.
- b. Applications will be rank-ordered by FIPSE based on the results of the peer review.
- c. The Russian Ministry will independently review all eligible applications that they receive, by the due date. These are the applications sent to the Russian Ministry by the Russian lead institution in the consortium.
- d. The Russian Ministry will then rank-order all eligible applications based on the results of their review.
- e. After these independent reviews and rank ordering, FIPSE officials will meet with the officials from the Russian Ministry to make the final selection of the winners who will receive joint funding from the Department and the Russian Federation. Projects will be funded only when both funding agencies are in agreement.

5. The evaluation criteria to be used by FIPSE are (see the section on Evaluation Criteria for detailed explanations for each):

- a. Project Need (10 Points)
- b. Significance of the Project (15 Points)

- c. Project Design and Management Plan (30 Points)
 - d. Project Personnel (15 Points)
 - e. Resources (10 Points)
 - f. Project Evaluation Plan (20 Points)
6. Number of Awards: Up to three awards will be made in FY 2009, one in each of the three areas listed above.
7. Duration: The project duration will be three years or 36 months.
8. Grant sum
- a. The grant for each project would be a maximum of US\$400 over 36 months, but not exceeding US\$150K in any single 12-month period during the duration of the project.
 - b. The funding for the U.S. institutions in the consortium will be disbursed by U.S. Department of Education through the lead U.S. institution. The Russian Ministry of Education and Science would provide an equivalent Ruble amount to the Russian consortium partners.

The Russian institutions should contact the Russian Ministry for details of application guidelines, evaluation criteria, application deadline, etc. to be used by the Russian Ministry to receive and evaluate applications from the Russian partner in the consortium.

Though FIPSE and the Russian Ministry are issuing similar application materials and program guidelines to the institutions in their respective countries, some important differences exist to reflect country-specific needs. Because of the differences in the application procedures, it is possible that the application for funding to FIPSE by the U.S. institution may not be identical to the application to the Russian Ministry by the Russian institution. It is important, nonetheless, that the proposal is developed jointly and the applications are as similar as possible, proposing the same project objectives and activities, in order to facilitate a comparable evaluation from both sides. The consortium partners from both countries should agree on the objectives and content of the application. This should be stated clearly in the agreement letters or memorandum of understanding.

Details of the submission procedures for the U.S. applicants are given in the sections that follow.

Program Narrative

A proposal must include a program narrative of no more than 20 pages (typed, double spaced, font size 12, one inch margin all round).

Please review carefully the six application evaluation criteria described in the section 'Evaluation Criteria' before writing this narrative. The narrative, along with other required components of the application package, will be evaluated against these criteria.

Please state at the start of the narrative which one of the three grants, A, B, or C you are competing for:

- A. Environmental Science Studies
- B. Biotechnology Studies, or
- C. A discipline other than Environmental Science and Biotechnology.

In general, it is expected that in order to satisfy all evaluation criteria, a narrative would include the following.

- A project design to address the need for the proposed project and strategies to solve the identified problems
- The significance of the proposed project in relation to other completed and/or on-going works, and the outcomes it aims to achieve in the three year grant period
- Strengths and track record of the project team and the institutional resources committed for solving the proposed problems, capacity building, and dissemination
- A plan of action or implementation plan
- A timeline for project activities
- An evaluation plan
- A plan for institutionalization and dissemination of project results.

A project funded under this program must accomplish all of the five goals listed under the section 'Program Goals and Subject Areas for FY2009'. It is therefore vital that in the area of study chosen, the application states how these five goals will be achieved.

The narratives can take the form of one single essay, or broken into sections. This choice is left to the applicant. It is recommended that narratives have a one-page summary.

Information and data needed to support the narrative can be included as addenda, which is in addition to the 20-page limit for the narrative. Examples are resumes of team members, project time line (as bar graphs or MS Project tables), equipment details, bibliography, results of past projects, etc.

The design of the project should address the educational goals of the project, such as innovative ways to address a common problem that reflect Russian-American cooperation in higher education. Explain how the project will enhance understanding of the issue(s) identified and how the resources of each U.S. and Russian institutions in the consortium will contribute to the project. Explain how this collaborative study project will operate as a consortium. Clearly delineate what skills and resources will each institutional partner contribute to the project? The application must include detailed information about the project director of each partner institution, and state clearly how each partner of the consortium project will provide input to the project.

Project evaluation is critical to the success of any project and, in particular, to ensure long-term benefits of the work beyond the grant period. An evaluation plan must be included in the project narrative. Evaluation should be based on subjective and objective evaluation techniques. Further, the evaluation plan must provide evidence that the evaluation data will be utilized during the course of the project to improve outcomes and to ensure that the products developed work as well in the hands of new users as they do in the hands of the developers. The evaluation plan must include methods to assess gains in language acquisition.

Since U.S. grantees must submit an evaluation report as part of the annual performance report as well as a final evaluation report as part of the final performance report, we recommend that you name an external evaluator in your application. It is important that you request funds in your budget to support project evaluation throughout the three years of your project.

Your proposal should include strategies for sustainability and for dissemination of project outcomes or products to a wider public, and specifically how others would learn from your project.

Within the guidelines given above, the application should include as much information as possible about faculty, staff, and student participants in the project, and it should outline the participants' goals, and provide the timing of their proposed visits to the partner university.

Evaluation Criteria

The quality of proposals from U.S. applicants will be judged by a U.S. peer review panel on the basis of the award criteria set out below. Note: The Russian Ministry will use similar criteria to judge the quality of proposals from the Russian applicants.

- a. Project Need (10 Points)
- b. Significance of the Project (15 Points)
- c. Project Design and Management Plan (30 Points)
- d. Project Personnel (15 Points)
- e. Resources (10 Points)
- f. Project Evaluation Plan (20 Points)

Each one of these is described in detail below.

a. Project Need (10 Points)

The proposal should identify and justify the need for the project. There should be a clearly defined problem area afflicts postsecondary education in both United States and Russia. The problem domain could be from any aspect of educational activities in the consortium IHEs that support the objectives of the U.S.-Russia Program described in this document.

The strength of the 'need' described in the application will be assessed using the following EDGAR¹ criteria, Section 75.210 (a).

- (i) The magnitude or severity of the problem to be addressed by the proposed project.

¹ EDGAR can be downloaded from <http://www.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/edgarReg/edgar.html>

- (ii) The extent to which specific gaps or weaknesses in services, infrastructure, or opportunities have been identified and will be addressed by the proposed project, including the nature and magnitude of those gaps or weaknesses.

As a general guide, to meet the objectives of the U.S.-Russia Program, the Secretary expects that the proposals include a need statement to describe:

- Magnitude or severity of the problem, gaps or weaknesses in the current level of knowledge, curricula, or pedagogy for teaching and learning in the academic discipline selected by the consortium.
- The extent to which the project would train and educate faculty, students and education administrators in both countries to address the problems identified.
- The extent to which the project would address the needs of disadvantaged individuals or students in both countries.

b. Significance of the Project (15 Points)

The significance of the project and the services it would provide will be assessed based on the extent to which it would contribute to the theory, knowledge and practices to improve education in the field selected. Describe the potential outcomes from your project such as new or improved curricula, pedagogies, teaching materials, trained personnel, processes, techniques, strategies, global understanding, etc. that would be of value to institutions in both countries.

The project significance and the quality of services described in the application will be assessed using the following EDGAR criteria, Section 75.210 (b).

- (i) The potential contribution of the proposed project to increased knowledge or understanding of educational problems, issues, or effective strategies.
- (ii) The likelihood that the proposed project will result in system change or improvement.
- (iii) The extent to which the proposed project is likely to yield findings that may be utilized by other appropriate agencies and organizations.

- (iv) The extent to which the proposed project involves the development or demonstration of promising new strategies that builds on, or is an alternative to, existing strategies.
- (v) The potential replicability of the proposed project or strategies, including, as appropriate, the potential for implementation in a variety of settings.
- (vi) The importance or magnitude of the results or outcomes likely to be attained by the proposed project.

The project significance and the quality of services described in the application will also be assessed using the following EDGAR criteria, Section 75.210 (d). In determining the quality of the services to be provided by the proposed project, the Secretary considers the quality and sufficiency of strategies for ensuring equal access and treatment for eligible project participants who are members of groups that have traditionally been underrepresented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability.

As a general guide, to meet the objectives of the U.S.-Russia Program, the Secretary expects that the significance and services statement should include the extent to which the project outcomes will:

- Contribute to the improvement of the educational system in all organizations in the consortium.
- Improve the level of theory and knowledge of educational practices currently used in the U.S. and Russian IHEs.
- Be disseminated and utilized by other institutions in the U.S. or Russia or other countries.
- Be transferable to or replicated and utilized by other agencies or organizations – public and private – and globally, especially in the U.S. and Russia.

c. Project Design and Management Plan (30 Points)

The proposal must include well-defined goals, a detailed plan of activities, expected outcomes and development strategies; a plan for collaboration with the lead Russian institution and other consortium partners; and an implementation plan. This is primarily a collaborative program between the IHEs from the Russian Federation and the U.S. As such, details of the collaboration – including the exchange of students, staff and faculty – must be provided. The courses to be developed; course contents to be delivered

by faculty at the IHEs in the other country; course contents to be taken by students in the other country; credits or certification to be earned; etc should be carefully thought-out and described.

This will be judged on its rigor, relevance, and likelihood to yield final deliverables that will achieve the stated goals. It will also be judged on its usefulness to others who may want to adapt and implement them on their own campuses. The aim is to have a project plan where progress can be measured, evaluated, and monitored.

The quality of project design and management plan described in the application will be assessed using the following EDGAR criteria, Section 75.210 (c).

- (i) The extent to which the goals, objectives, and outcomes to be achieved by the proposed project are clearly specified and measurable.
- (ii) The extent to which the design of the proposed project is appropriate to, and will successfully address, the needs of the target population or other identified needs.
- (iii) The extent to which the design of the proposed project includes a thorough, high-quality review of the relevant literature, a high-quality plan for project implementation, and the use of appropriate methodological tools to ensure successful achievement of project objectives.
- (iv) The extent to which the proposed project is designed to build capacity and yield results that will extend beyond the period of Federal financial assistance.
- (v) The extent to which the proposed project will be coordinated with similar or related efforts, and with other appropriate community, State, and Federal resources in both countries.
- (vi) The extent to which the proposed project encourages consumer involvement.
- (vii) The extent to which performance feedback and continuous improvement are integral to the design of the proposed project.

The quality of project design and management plan described in the application will also be assessed using the following EDGAR criteria, Section 75.210 (g).

- (i) The adequacy of the management plan to achieve the objectives of the proposed project on time and within budget, including clearly defined responsibilities, timelines, and milestones for accomplishing project tasks.
- (ii) The adequacy of procedures for ensuring feedback and continuous improvement in the execution of the proposed project.
- (iii) The adequacy of mechanisms for ensuring high-quality products and services from the proposed project.
- (iv) The extent to which the time commitments of the project director and principal investigator and other key project personnel are appropriate and adequate to meet the objectives of the proposed project.
- (v) Ensuring that a diversity of perspectives are brought to bear in the execution of the proposed project, including those of parents, teachers, the business community, a variety of disciplinary and professional fields, recipients or beneficiaries of services, or others, as appropriate.

As a general guide, to meet the objectives of the U.S.-Russia Program, the Secretary expects that the proposed project design and management plan should include:

- Development framework, methods, tools and infrastructure (including IT, media, laboratories, video conferencing, and other facilities).
- An implementation plan with details of project activities including a project schedule.
- Details of the academic exchanges, such as the number of students and faculty expected to travel, and the purpose, duration and schedule for travel during the three years of the program.
- Plans for achieving proficiency in Russian for students and faculty who will be part of the exchange.
- Plans for periodic evaluation of progress and performance feedback.
- Project priorities ('must have' or 'must do' requirements).
- A risk and mitigation plan.
- A list of periodic and final documents and/or deliverables (curricula, training materials, etc). Note that an annual report and a final report are required.
- Collaboration activities with other agencies and organizations if this project is a part of or an extension to an ongoing research or development effort.

- A process for selecting and training students and faculty for the exchange (mobility) program.
- A plan for 'transfer' of knowledge and/or information on how the outcomes can be 'replicated' by others.

d. Project Personnel (15 Points)

The relevant qualifications, skills and experience of the personnel supporting the project both in the U.S. and Russia are key factors in this evaluation criterion. Applications should include a detailed description of qualifications of personnel who would support this project. Language proficiency in Russian is a key factor in the success of this project.

The adequacy of personnel described in the application will be assessed using the following EDGAR criteria, Section 75.210 (e).

- (i) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of the project director or principal investigator.
- (ii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of key project personnel.
- (iii) The qualifications, including relevant training and experience, of project consultants or subcontractors.
- (iv) Evidence of personnel selection process that encourages applications from persons who are members of groups that traditionally have been under-represented based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, or disability (this is a mandatory requirement).

As a general guide, to meet the objectives of the U.S.-Russia Program, the Secretary expects that the proposal should provide:

- Prior experience of working with a Russian IHE in an academic or exchange program.
- Qualifications and proficiency in Russian language of key U.S. project staff and in English of key Russian project staff.
- Qualifications and experience in the academic discipline that is the focus of the project.
- Qualifications and experience in education research, instructional design, and education evaluation and assessment.

- Current proficiency (or expected proficiency after training) in Russian language of U.S. students and in English of Russian students who will be part of the exchange.

e. Resources (10 Points)

The success of a well-designed project depends on the adequacy of resources available for its implementation. Applications should include a detailed description of resources that will be committed to this project both in the U.S. and Russia. Indicate if the resources will be provided by the lead-applicant organization, or would be acquired at a cost from the project budget.

The adequacy of the resource commitments described in the application will be assessed using the following EDGAR criteria, Section 75.210 (f).

- (i) The adequacy of support, including facilities, equipment, supplies, and other resources, from the applicant organization or the lead applicant organization.
- (ii) The relevance and demonstrated commitment of each partner in the proposed project to the implementation and success of the project.
- (iii) The extent to which the budget is adequate to support the proposed project.
- (iv) The extent to which the costs are reasonable in relation to the objectives, design, and potential significance of the proposed project.
- (v) The potential for continued support of the project after the Federal funding ends, including, as appropriate, the demonstrated commitment of appropriate entities to such support.
- (vi) The potential for the incorporation of project purposes, activities, or benefits into the ongoing program of the agency or organization at the end of Federal funding.

As a general guide, to meet the objectives of the U.S. Russia program, the Secretary expects that the project should have:

- Adequate support infrastructure including equipment, facilities and supplies provided by the organizations and institutions supporting the proposal and the project.

- Planned for an adequate budget based on reasonable costs to support all project tasks, including travel and external evaluator.
- Adequate continued support from lead-applicant organization should the federal funding end before project completion.

f. Project Evaluation Plan (20 Points)

Formative and summative evaluation conducted by an independent external evaluator is a critical aspect. Applications should therefore include plans for engaging an evaluator, who would be expected to provide an evaluation of the project design, project performance at milestones, and the final outcomes. It is important, therefore, that relevant measurement criteria needed for evaluation are considered during the project design. If evaluations are to be done both in the U.S. and Russian Federation, the plan should indicate how this would be done jointly and cooperatively.

The quality of the evaluation plan described in the application will be assessed using the following EDGAR criteria, Section 75.210 (h).

- (i) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are thorough, feasible, and appropriate to the goals, objectives, and outcomes of the proposed project.
- (ii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation are appropriate to the context within which the project operates.
- (iii) The extent to which the methods of evaluation provide for examining the effectiveness of project implementation strategies.
- (iv) The extent to which the methods of evaluation include the use of objective performance measures that are clearly related to the intended outcomes of the project and will produce quantitative and qualitative data to the extent possible.
- (v) The extent to which the methods of evaluation will provide performance feedback and permit periodic assessment of progress toward achieving intended outcomes.
- (vi) The extent to which the evaluation will provide guidance about effective strategies suitable for replication or testing in other settings.

As a general guide, to meet the objectives of the U.S. Russia program, the Secretary expects that the evaluation plan and methods should:

- Be comprehensive and relevant to the project context and goals.
- Be able to assess the effectiveness of project plan and implementation strategies.
- Identify objective performance measures that would provide qualitative and quantitative data on project outcomes.
- Be capable of providing timely guidance and performance feedback based on periodic assessment of project plan and outcomes, both for evaluating progress as well as for quality assurance.
- Provide an assessment if the project strategies and design can be replicated or transferred to a different setting.

Submission of Applications

Applicants may submit more than one proposal and may accept more than one award for different projects. Selection of funded projects will be determined on the merits of each proposal.

The U.S. partners must submit applications through Grants.Gov, an Internet-based electronic system.

The closing date for receiving Applications is July 7, 2009.

Contact Information

U.S. applicants seeking further information should contact the U.S.-Russia Program Coordinator:

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